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ABSTRACT

"Transformation" is a process whereby an existing, controlled (predominantly Protestant) or maintained (predominantly Catholic) school can "transform" to Grant Maintained Integrated or Controlled Integrated status (a school where Protestants and Catholics are educated together). Since 1996, this process has been promoted by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland (DENI) as the "preferred" route to integration (preferred over setting up new "integrated" schools). However, until this point there has been virtually no systematic research evidence that investigates the process in practice. This paper discusses research that "mapped" the process of "transformation" in six of the twelve transforming schools in Northern Ireland. Using both quantitative and qualitative data, the study describes how teachers in "transforming" schools feel about the process of "transformation." The study also discusses the factors that primarily influence these feelings. Finally, the paper examines at the implications of this research evidence for the way in which both teachers and principals are trained to implement the "transformation" process in schools in Northern Ireland. (Contains 4 figures and a 19-item bibliography. Appendixes contain a school aggregate profile matrix and a network diagram.) (Author/BT)

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Improving Integrating Education in N[orthern] Ireland: Teachers' Experiences of the Process of "Transformation."

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IMPROVING INTEGRATING EDUCATION IN N.IRELAND: TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF THE PROCESS OF 'TRANSFORMATION'

'Transformation' is a process whereby an existing, controlled (predominantly Protestant) or maintained (predominantly Catholic) school, can 'transform' to Grant Maintained Integrated or Controlled Integrated status (a school where Protestants and Catholics are educated together). Since 1996 it is a process that has been promoted by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland (DENI) as the 'preferred' route to integration (preferred over setting up new 'integrated' schools). However, up until this point there has been virtually no systematic research evidence that investigates the process in practice. In this paper the author discusses one aspect of her doctoral research that 'mapped' the process of 'transformation' in six of the twelve transforming schools in Northern Ireland. Using both quantitative and qualitative data she describes how teachers in 'transforming' schools feel about the process of 'transformation' and then highlights and discusses the factors that primarily influence these feelings. Finally, she looks at the implications of this research evidence for the way in which both teachers and principals are trained to implement the 'transformation' process in schools in Northern Ireland.

Since the creation of Northern Ireland in 1921, schooling has been segregated (i.e. schools are either predominantly Protestant or predominantly Catholic). However, in the early seventies, the process of 'integrating' education in Northern Ireland began to gain impetus. Rising community tension brought with it an increased urgency to look at ways in which education could be an 'integrating' rather than 'dividing' force between Protestants and Catholics. Since that time the process of 'integrating' education in Northern Ireland has begun to affect both the process and the structure of schools. Curriculum initiatives such as Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU), introduced in 1989 as part of the Education Reform N. Ireland Order, are attempting to help teachers use the whole curriculum to foster community relations. A number of new (planned) integrated schools have also been opened since 1981 in an attempt to give both Protestant and Catholic pupils the opportunity of being educated together. However, by 1998 it was obvious that the process of 'integrating' education in Northern Ireland had difficulties. Therefore, educationalists began to make suggestions as to how the process of 'integrating' education in Northern Ireland could be improved.

One such suggestion was that 'transformation' would be a better route to developing integrated schools than setting up new schools (i.e. planned integration). 'Transformation' is a process whereby an existing, controlled (predominantly Protestant) or maintained (predominantly Catholic) school, can 'transform' to Grant Maintained Integrated or Controlled Integrated status. The idea of 'transformation' was first proposed in the 1978 Education (N.I.) Act. However, at that time, it did not receive support from the main Christian churches and the very high percentage of parents, which was needed to embark on the change process, made it almost impossible to imagine a situation where it would really 'work'. In 1989 in a political atmosphere of 'parental choice' the procedure was laid down a second time (ERO 1989 Articles 68-71). This time 'transformation' was taken up

by a number of schools. By 1996 five schools in Northern Ireland had 'transformed' and the then Minister for Education was presenting 'transformation' as the preferred route to integration. *'Now that integrated schools have proved themselves, we should be able to look to more transformation cases, and not have to rely on new purpose built schools as the main vehicle' (for integrated education)* (Ancram, M. MP, 1996). However, the expressed preference for the 'transformation' route to integration caused a great deal of concern among the integration movement. They were unhappy with the statutory requirements for 'transformation' which at that time only required the school to *'be likely to be attended by reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils.'* (ERO, 1989, Article 71, para, 8). Integrationists saw this as a very narrow conception of integration and one that could threaten both the growth and the impact of integrated schools in Northern Ireland. Due to these concerns a more comprehensive debate arose about the process of 'transformation' and the Department of Education (DENI) began to recognise that the process of an existing school changing its status is not a quick-fix solution to 'integration'. Soon after this DENI published 'A Framework for Transformation' (DENI, 1997) that redefined the earlier legislation concerning *'reasonable numbers'* of both Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils. This time they stated that *'evidence that at least 10% of the annual intake in the first year are drawn from the minority religion will be required before the school's integrated status could be approved (with the objective that over time this would increase to 30% or more).'*(DENI, 1997). A working party was also set up by the then Minister for Education, Tony Worthington MP, showing that DENI understood that if schools are to be encouraged to 'transform';

1. There is a need for an agreed information pack which covers all options and offers clear guidance on what is necessary to qualify for integrated status;
2. Roles and responsibilities of all interested parties should be clarified and co-ordinated;
3. More resources should be available to support curricular changes, staffing pressures and improved pastoral provision;
4. The concerns of the teaching staff affected by transformation and the key role of the principal also need to be considered and addressed; in particular, adequate training is necessary for principals, staff and governors to prepare them for transformation and for their leadership roles in bringing it about.

The aim of this paper is to outline research evidence related to point 4. (above). Up until this point the 'transformation' working party have given most of their attention to putting together an information pack, clarifying roles and responsibilities and stipulating resources needed to effect 'transformation'. Little evidence has been sought to address the concerns of teaching staff in the process or the key role of the principal. In a process that does not formally recognise staff opinions and yet expects staff to implement the changes, ignoring their concerns could be detrimental, a situation which this research sought to rectify.

As yet there has only been one systematic research project that has focused on the process of transformation in Northern Ireland. This was a Masters project that used questionnaires to examine;

1. The effectiveness of transformation as an initiative.
2. Ways in which transforming schools can be best supported.
3. The role of transformation in the future development of integrated education.

To answer point 2.(above) the researcher of the project sought to ascertain the concerns of teaching staff about becoming an integrated school. Within the body of the questionnaire the teachers were given a choice of 10 categories from which they were asked to identify (in rank order) which were most appropriate to their experience. The results of this questionnaire highlighted that the main concerns of staff were firstly related to job security, then to the recruitment policy for minority teachers, the need to head count, the removal of children from the school, dealing with sensitive issues, classroom conflicts and the delivery of the curriculum. On this basis it was concluded that *'there is a need to reassure permanent teachers that they will not be ousted from their jobs as a result of transformation'* (Donnelly, F. 1998).

On reading this evidence and the method used to obtain it i.e. pre-specified categories of 'concern', I became concerned that the evidence was both methodologically flawed and overly simplistic. In an environment where 'transformation' is increasingly recognised and where systematic research evidence on the process in action is virtually non-existent, I was also concerned that the above evidence would form the basis of 'transformation' training for both staff and principals. On this basis, part of my overall research design aimed to use an alternative method (to questionnairres) to examine teachers' experiences of 'transformation'.

Research Design

The method that I used to carry out the research was part of the 'Cambridge Manual of Research Techniques: Mapping Change in Schools' (Hopkins, D., Balshaw, M. and Black-Hawkins, K. 1994). This set of research techniques was developed out of a recognition that *'the traditional methods such as interviews, questionnaires and observations are sometimes too cumbersome and time consuming in disclosing the intricacies of school cultures and the change process'* (Hopkins, D. et. al. 1994). It was therefore intended that the new techniques would be interesting, attractive and worthwhile to subjects while maintaining the rigour necessary for collecting valid and reliable data.

The technique for collecting data on teachers' experiences involves a sample of staff being presented with a set of words printed on individual cards e.g. committed, enthusiastic, anxious, pressurised. Having looked at the cards, the staff member is then asked to sort each one into a series of boxes marked 'often', 'sometimes', 'hardly ever', 'doesn't seem relevant' according to how they feel about the 'transformation' process. (Some blank cards are also made available to allow the teacher to add words of their own). Following this exercise a short interview is carried out wherein the teachers are asked to explain why they have put the various cards in each pile.

The technique was used in six of the twelve transforming schools in Northern Ireland, two post-primary and four primary schools. Both the post-primary schools were medium in size (>350 pupils) and the primary schools included one large school (>450 pupils), one medium sized school (>100 pupils) and two small schools (>100 pupils). Two of the schools had officially transformed in 1991, one in 1996 and three in 1998. Two of the schools were located in mixed areas, three in areas that were predominantly Protestant and one in an area that was predominantly Catholic. Finally, three of the schools were in the South Eastern Education and Library Board, two were in the North Eastern Education and Library Board and one was in the Southern Education and Library Board.

The principal chose the sample of teachers within each school. Each principal was asked for a sample of at least one third of the staff, including those with various levels of responsibility and various levels of involvement in the transformation process. The final overall sample included thirty-six teachers, twenty-two females and ten males, twenty-three Protestants and nine Catholics, twelve heads of department, twelve classroom teachers and eight, senior management. Six of the teachers had been at their schools for 0-3 years, nine had attended their schools for 4-6 years, eight had been there for 7-18 years and nine had attended their schools for over nineteen years. A cross tabulation of this sample is represented below.

FIG. 1.0 - CROSS TABULATION OF THE OVERALL SAMPLE DESCRIPTORS

	Religion		Sex		Position			Years			
	P	C	M	F	CT	HOD	SMT	0-3	4-6	7-18	>19
P	23	*	6	17	7	9	7	1	7	6	9
C	*	9	4	5	5	3	1	5	2	2	0
M	6	4	10	*	1	7	2	3	4	1	2
F	17	5	*	22	11	5	6	3	5	7	7
CT	7	5	1	11	12	*	*	3	3	5	1
HOD	9	3	7	5	*	12	*	1	5	2	4
SMT	7	1	2	6	*	*	8	2	1	1	4
0-3	1	5	3	3	3	1	2	6	*	*	*
4-6	7	2	4	5	3	5	1	*	9	*	*
7-18	6	2	1	7	5	2	1	*	*	8	*
>19	9	0	2	7	1	4	4	*	*	*	9

P = Protestant
C = Catholic

M=Male
F=Female

CT=Classroom Teacher
HOD= Head of Department
SMT= Senior Management

0-3 = years at school
4-6 = years at school
7-18= years at school
>19 = years at school

With each of the thirty six sample teachers I was able to use the 'experience of change' technique to investigate;

1. How teachers in transforming schools 'feel' about the transformation process.
2. What factors most influence teachers' experiences of the 'transformation' process.

A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

There have been many theoretical propositions put forward as to what factors most influence teachers' experiences of change. Sikes, P.J. (1985), Measor, L. (1985) and Huberman, M. (1988) all proposed that teachers' experiences of change vary depending on their stage of career (The Biographical Perspective). Rosario, J.R. (1986) summarised the views of those who believe that it is psychological factors such as security, habit or perception, that affect teachers' experiences of change (The Technical Perspective). Sparkes, A.C. (1989) and Edwards, G. (1992) both put forward the idea that teachers' experiences of change vary according to how they perceive that change to affect their position of power in the school (The Micro-political Perspective). Ball, S.J. (1987), Flinders, D.J. (1988) and Hargreaves, A. (1990) were more concerned with the effects that time, national curriculum policies, resources, training, pupil and parent expectations and wider social expectations have upon teachers' experiences of change (The Structural Perspective).

Prior to carrying out the research, it was my belief that the work of Sarason, S.B. (1990) and Eisner, E.W. (1992) would be most relevant to the case of 'transformation'. They posited that teachers' experiences of change vary depending on whether they are involved in initiating the change or not. It was my belief that teachers' experiences of the 'transformation' process would be most influenced by the fact that they were not formally included in the process i.e. the ability to proceed with the 'transformation' is based on the board of governors and a parental vote with no external consideration given to the desires of teachers. Due to this lack of involvement, I believed that teachers would not feel the 'sense of ownership and responsibility for the process of change' (DENI, 1997) that both, change theorists and policy makers in Northern Ireland, suggested would be necessary for the process to be effective.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

The data collected was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Analysis of the quantitative data began immediately following each teacher session when I entered the card positions into a 'school aggregate profile matrix' (see appendix 1.) where A= often, B= sometimes, C= hardly ever, D= doesn't seem relevant. This data was then entered into SPSS. Once tabulated, the values A-D were transformed into numerical values, to make further statistical analysis possible. The weightings given to each value were A =+2, B =+1, C =-1, D =-2. Once in numerical form I calculated the total value, for each teacher (1-32), for each 'type' of emotion i.e. very positive, positive, negative, very negative. I then summarised the descriptive statistics for the whole sample, (see fig 2.0) and by splitting the file according to the variables represented in figure 1.0 i.e. sex, position, religion, years, school(1-6) and finally type of school (primary or post-primary), I was able to determine any significant variations or patterns that occurred, within and across cases. Following this I calculated the frequency distributions for each of the emotions, for the whole sample and by splitting the file according to school, sex, position, religion, years and type. I then summarised this data into box charts (see fig 4.0) placing each of the emotions into the box that the highest percentage of teachers had chosen.

To analyse the qualitative data I used 'Atlas ti' to facilitate a type of grounded theory analysis (Tesch, R. 1990). After having transcribed and assigned the data to a hermeneutic unit within 'Atlas ti' I used the list of 'feelings' (see appendix 1.) to begin the coding process. This allowed me to isolate the appropriate 'units of analysis' from which I could begin to build a list of interpretative codes i.e. codes that interpreted the factors that influenced teacher's feelings. To do this I firstly attached a descriptive memo to each of the 'units of analysis'. Then I went back to the quotations and wrote up a case record for each school based on the set of feelings. I then compared the case record interpretation and the memo interpretation and began to build an interpretative code list. Finally, I used this code list to give each 'unit of analysis' an interpretative code, enabling me to begin building networks (see appendix 2).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The first significant research finding came from the descriptive statistics that were calculated for the various 'types' of feelings (see fig. 2.0)

FIG 2.0 - DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE OVERALL SAMPLE (32 TEACHERS) DETERMINING WHICH 'TYPE' OF EMOTION THE SAMPLE OF TEACHERS (FROM TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS) FEEL 'MOST OFTEN' IN REGARD TO THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
very positive index	32	-.25	1.00	.5059	.3022
positive index	32	-.25	1.00	.6914	.2910
negative index	32	-.88	.50	-.2539	.4194
very negative index	32	-.94	.38	-.4688	.3706
Valid N (listwise)	32				

The mean values of the overall sample results (shown above) indicate that the sample of teachers who participated in the research most often feel 'positive' and least often feel 'very negative' in relation to the 'transformation' process. This result does not vary according to school, sex, religion, years or type of school but slightly varies with regard to teacher position. The descriptive statistics produced by splitting the file according to whether the teacher is a classroom teacher, part of senior management or a head of department (or year in a primary school) indicated that, by a small margin, the teachers who are part of senior management most often feel 'very positive' in relation to the transformation process.

Following on from my theoretical hypothesis I began to question whether this was in some way related to the fact that senior management were more 'involved' in the process of 'transformation' than both heads of department or classroom teachers. Investigating this hypothesis further I found that the most significant difference between teacher positions in the frequency tables was related to how often they feel 'supported'. The data

showed that 75% of senior management often feel 'supported' in the process of transformation, 50% of the heads of department often feel 'supported', whereas 41.7% of classroom teachers only sometimes feel 'supported' and 25% of classroom teachers hardly ever feel supported.

On looking at the qualitative data it seemed that most of the senior management felt supported in the transformation process because they were 'involved' in a team with either the principal or the board of governors.

"I suppose I felt support from other members of the board as a teacher I don't think I felt supported but as a member of the board I felt the support of the other members of the board."

"It was really a team thing so there was plenty of support going on from the principals point of view."

"The support that I give her and she gives me I certainly am valued."

For heads of department 'supported' was once again related to their 'involvement' in the process. Those who often felt supported were typically those who perceived that 'transformation' directly 'involved' them i.e those who headed subjects such as History or English and those primary teachers who headed the lower years, or the years wherein pupils had to be prepared for first communion or confirmation.

"I felt supported again with being P1 its hit me first in a way but knowing that this has been thought through and people are there if I have any queries they can help me deal with it and especially from the Catholic religion point of view because we have got P1's coming in and I wasn't qualified to teach it but the girl who has been doing it has been great and has worked very well with us at the P1 level which is needed you know."

Whereas for classroom teachers, their lack of feeling 'supported' was related to:

1. Only 'sometimes' feeling that they were 'involved' in something that they could be supported in. "Supported I suppose not really supported in that there is nothing that has been done so far to feel supported for."

2. The beginning of the 'Transformation' process when they were not 'involved' in the process."There were so many big decisions and the teachers just simply weren't involved in that and yes the parents have the right to decide but again the teachers have to implement it."

From this data it seemed that there may be a correlation between involvement in the process and positive feelings about the process i.e. the more 'involved' the teacher is in the 'transformation' process the more positive they will feel about it. However, although

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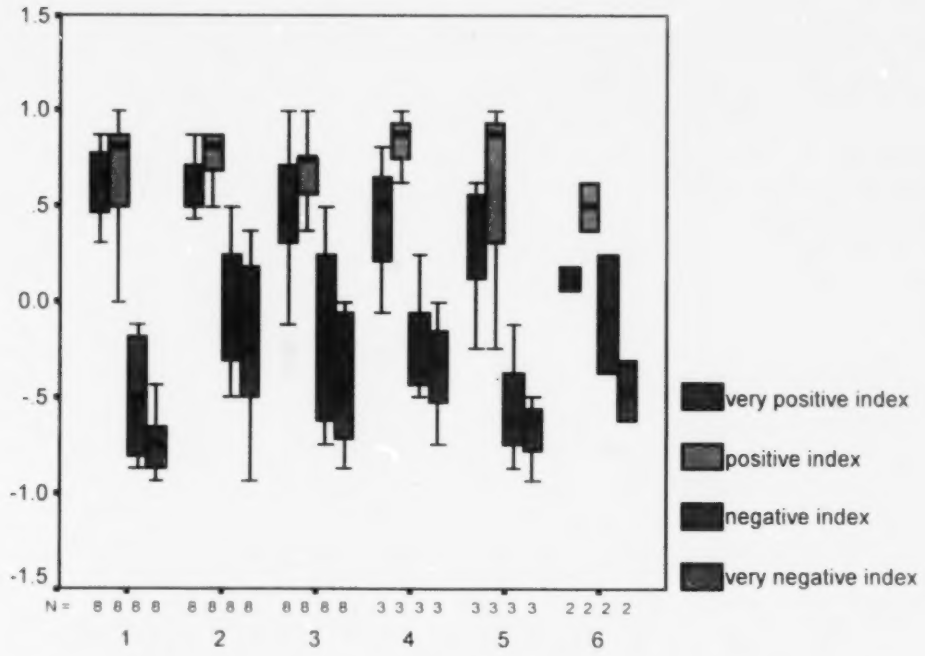
the data pointed out that senior management most often felt 'very positive' about the process of transformation it also showed that they felt negative about the process more often than both heads of department and classroom teachers. Therefore I wondered if this pointed to the fact that those more 'involved' in the process of 'transformation' would in general have a higher 'strength' of feeling (both positive and negative) about the process. I began to look at the rest of the data to see if, the correlation between those feeling most positive and most negative about the process, was true in any other case.

Firstly, I discovered that the mean values for individual schools show that teachers in school two feel most positive about the transformation process and most negative see figure 3.0.

FIG 3.0 - BOX-PLOT INDICATING 'HOW OFTEN' THE SAMPLE OF TEACHERS IN EACH SCHOOL FELT THE VARIOUS 'TYPES' OF EMOTIONS.



School two is one of the two schools that transformed in 1991 (the other was school 6). This was the first year that any school had transformed and due to the area in which school two was situated, it faced a great deal of opposition. However, since the school was officially granted 'integrated' status a great deal of internal change has occurred, both in terms of pupil and staff ratio's, as well as in the formal and informal curriculum. Due to the degree of opposition that occurred in the initiation phase of 'transformation' as well as the degree of change that has occurred since the implementation of

'transformation' it is unlikely that any teacher in school two would not feel very 'involved' in the process. Therefore once again it seemed that there may be a correlation between those most 'involved' in the process and those who have the highest strength of feeling about the process.

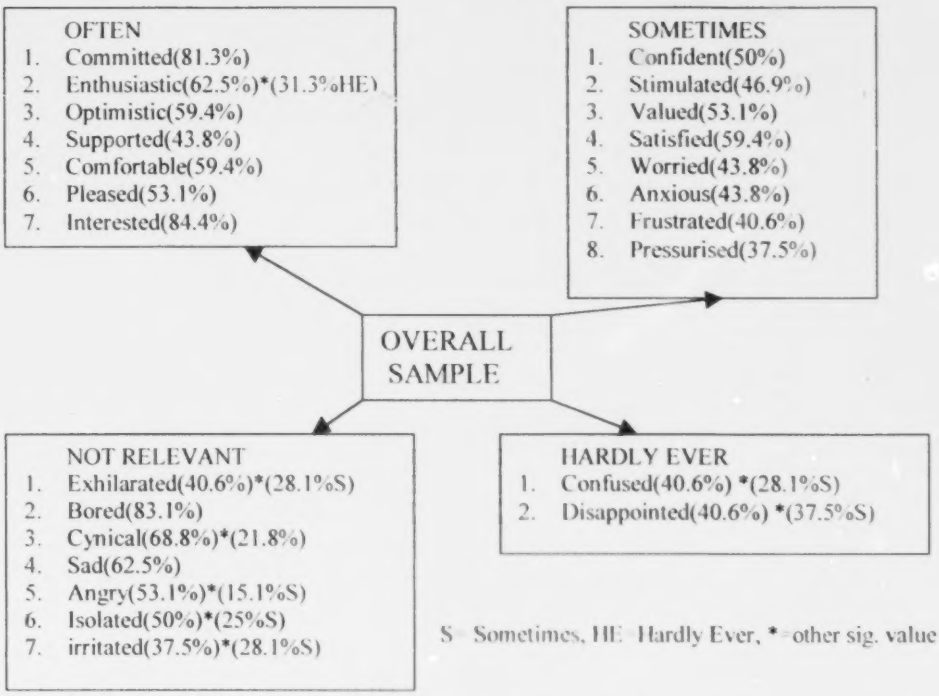
Another case in which the trend occurred was in the case of Protestant and Catholic teachers. The mean values highlighted that Catholic teachers felt both more positive and more negative about the process of transformation than Protestant teachers. Once again, this is not surprising due to the fact that in most cases these Catholic teachers have made a conscious decision to come to the school. The frequency data from the specific variables shows that they therefore feel more 'committed' 'enthusiastic' and 'optimistic' about the process than Protestants. Yet once part of the school the frequency data shows that they also feel negative (in particular 'frustrated' and 'disappointed') much more frequently than their Protestant counterparts.

The trend also occurs in the mean values for the sample of teachers when they are split by years i.e teachers who have been at the school for 0-3 years, 7-18 years, 4-6 years and >19years. The data testifies that teachers who have been at the school for greater than nineteen years feel most positive and most negative about the process of transformation. A high percentage of these teachers often feel committed, enthusiastic, optimistic, confident, supported, comfortable, pleased and interested in the process of transformation. However, a high percentage, also sometimes feel, worried, confused, anxious, irritated, angry and pressurised by the process. This result is significantly different from the results of teachers who have been at their schools for 7-18 years and 4-6 years. In both of these cases most of the negative feelings were placed in the 'hardly ever' or 'doesn't seem relevant' boxes. However, for teachers who have been at the school for 0-3 years they also feel a number of negative feelings on quite a frequent basis. These results may in some way correlate with the results gained when teachers are split according to religion and position. Most of the teachers who have been at the schools for >19 years hold management positions and most of the teachers who have been at the schools for 0-3 years are from the 'minority' community or have particularly wanted to work in the 'integrated' sector. Therefore once again these are the teachers most 'involved' or most 'invested' in the process.

In conclusion, the data points out that from the sample of teachers that participated in the research, Catholic teachers, teachers from school two, senior management and teachers who have been at their schools for greater than nineteen years or less than three years have the highest strength of feeling (both positive and negative) about the 'transformation' process. It would also seem that there is a correlation between those teachers in the sample who have the highest strength of feeling about the 'transformation' process and those who are most involved or invested in the process.

The second set of research findings was based on the box charts that summarised the frequency distributions of each particular 'feeling' see fig 4.0 for the results of the overall sample.

FIG 4.0 - BOX CHART OF SUMMARISED FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS FOR OVERALL SAMPLE



S= Sometimes, HE Hardly Ever, * =other sig. value

The box chart shows that 'committed' and 'interested' are the two positive variables that, the sample of teachers, feel most often in relation to the 'transformation' process. 'Satisfied' and 'valued' are the two positive variables that teachers feel least often in regard to the 'transformation' process. 'Worried' and 'anxious' are the two negative variables that teachers feel most often in relation to the 'transformation' process and 'bored' and 'cynical' are the two variables that most teachers do not think are relevant to the 'transformation' process.

These results vary considerably according to school, sex, religion, position and years although are totally reflective of the results in post-primary schools.

In primary schools one of the most significant variations was in relation to the positive emotions that were felt least often. The data showed that the positive emotion that was felt least often was 'confident' with 56% of teachers in the sample from primary schools only feeling confident sometimes and 18.8% of teachers in the sample from primary schools hardly ever feeling 'confident'. This correlated with the results for female teachers and those schools wherein the sample of staff were all female (i.e. schools 3, 5 and 6). However, the qualitative data does not show that there is any cohesive reason among female staff for their feelings of lack of confidence and therefore it is difficult to give any hypothesis on such a result.

One of the negative emotions that teachers in primary schools felt most often was 'frustration' where 50% of teachers in the sample from primary schools sometimes felt

'frustrated' by the process of 'transformation'. This correlated with the results of Catholic teachers, classroom teachers, teachers in the 7-18 years bracket and those teachers in medium or small primary schools. The qualitative data showed that the factor that most influenced these feelings was lack of support. This, once again, took me back to my original hypothesis that lack of support (which can also be interpreted from the data as lack of involvement or recognition in the process) is one of the primary factors that influences teacher feelings in relation to 'transformation'. Therefore it was at this point that I began to look at the qualitative data as a whole to see if this trend continued.

The interpretative codes that were developed out of the data showed that the factors that have most effect on teacher's experiences of 'transformation' are;

1. Their beliefs about the 'outcomes' of integrated education.
2. Their understandings of the 'meaning' of transformation.
3. The actual 'conditions' of the change process.
4. The 'support' that both they and the school receive throughout the process.

More specifically, the research shows that teachers' experiences of transformation are most affected by; their beliefs in integrated education; their understandings of the meaning of transformation; the attitudes of pupils in the school; the pupil ratios in the school and the support that they receive from the Department of Education and the principal.

The data shows that although support or involvement is one of the key factors that influences teachers' experiences of transformation it is not as influential as teachers' beliefs. This is highlighted by the explanations given for teacher's 'commitment' to the process (see appendix 2).

One of the most common explanations given for teachers' 'commitment' to 'transformation' was because they believed in 'integrated' education.

"Integration is something that I'm committed to so it's quite exciting I'm committed to that kind of education."

"I mean I am a great believer in integrated education myself as I said my children went through the system and I feel that it was a great help to them as they moved on to Secondary education."

"I am very committed to the whole idea of integrated education and I think it is very important."

Some teachers were more specific about their commitment relating to a belief not only in integration but also the 'transformation' route to integration.

"I'm very committed to it em committed yes I think that it would go without saying that I am committed to integrated transformation I'm a teacher and a Catholic from West Belfast who taught in you know a large Catholic Convent

Catholic school so to make a move to somewhere like this would require commitment."

Some believed that bringing pupils together was the only way in which the prejudices could be tackled in Northern Ireland.

"I will start with the committed if that is OK I would only ever work in an integrated school in Northern Ireland I refuse to apply to any other type of school I worked for five years in England in eh comprehensive schools and when I came here I only applied to integrated schools I refuse to work anywhere else I see that it is the only way that you can actually reduce the conflict in Northern Ireland you have got to actually take people de-demonise them and us and the only way you can de-demonise and take away the horns is to actually understand they are just human beings just like you and me and then it takes away half the conflict ignorance is the cause of the conflict half the time so I am 100% committed."

One teacher even believed that the integration of their particular school was of particular importance to the future of Northern Ireland (their school was positioned in an area of heightened conflict).

"I have put committed in the often box because I wouldn't be here unless I was committed to it it was a very conscious decision to come here to work because of its geographical location and its importance to the future of the society and the young people."

One of the other key factors influencing teachers experience of transformation was their understanding of the meaning of the process (i.e. what it is, how it proceeds and what their role is in the process). The data shows that teachers who understood this 'meaning' felt 'confident' 'enthusiastic' and 'interested' in the process whereas teachers who did not understand felt 'anxious' 'confused' 'irritated' and 'isolated'.

"I was anxious em I knew nobody who taught in an integrated school I knew I was ignorant I knew nothing of it and I think ignorance at times is a dreadful thing and you think no I am not going to have anything to do with it I was anxious worried."

"It is more through ignorance that you are worried at the beginning I think that was my only worry just through lack of knowledge."

"Irritated not really any more I was at the beginning just through not knowing enough about it."

"Comfortable now wasn't so comfortable at the beginning because really ignorant of what it was going to involve."

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A basic understanding of the meaning of change also proved to be influential to teachers' experiences. Those teachers who understood that change is uncertain, uncomfortable, and takes a lot of time, felt more positive about the process than those who did not.

"I shouldn't feel anxious about it because it is a long process it is a change over a space of time it is not going to happen over night and I have learnt that within any school environment."

"I am very optimistic because I think it is like an acorn its eh we are only making a little impact now but like an acorn that grows and takes a long time and a lot of patience and I probably won't see it in my lifetime but it will make an impact."

Whereas teachers who did not understand the long-term nature of change in general and 'transformation' in particular often felt 'frustrated' and 'disappointed'.

"Hardly ever disappointed I em just about how slow it is going which I mentioned a few times and I feel that we have been integrated for quite a while now and apart from the name I don't feel that there is a massive change that has taken place."

"I do get frustrated and impatient and only at times and eh I have to accept that these changes are not going to happen over night."

The qualitative data showed that teachers' beliefs about the potential outcomes of integration and their understanding of the 'meaning' of transformation have a fundamental influence on teachers' experiences of the 'transformation' process. Two other factors that were of fundamental importance were the support that the teachers received from the principal and from the Department of Education.

As predicted, the teachers in transforming schools experienced negative feelings in the transformation process because of their lack of formal involvement. The data showed that this lack of recognition resulted in teachers feeling 'disappointed' 'undervalued' 'irritated', 'frustrated' and 'confused'. However, the data also showed that these negative feelings have much less effect on teachers' overall experiences when they are valued, recognised and supported by their own principal.

"Valued do you mean as a member of staff I put that there because although we don't have a choice its up to the parents we were in many ways valued in that we were tried to be kept as up to date as possible and although we didn't have a lot of decision making they tried to keep us you know in the picture and make us maybe think that we did or you know ease it for us because this was our place of work and we had chosen to teach here and this transformation was going to take place and although it was going to be forced upon us they didn't want us to feel that way."

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"Sometimes valued in that we would all be valued as a teaching staff here but in terms of our decision it didn't actually count it was the decision of the parents so yes we would be important to the principal and all the senior management of the school but in terms of the actual transformation our final say didn't count."

The data showed that supportive internal school leadership could help teachers feel 'valued' and 'comfortable', whereas leadership that did not recognise or fully involve staff made their experience one of confusion and isolation.

"A bit confused at times just trying to keep up with the information that is being passed down eh all the integration information that the principal receives."

"In a way I felt a bit isolated I suppose maybe I felt a bit on my own for the reasons I was doing things it was just the way things were going on also isolated in the way that the senior management team seemed to know more about what was going on than we did and we found out second hand you know that sort of way."

The final two factors that were very influential in shaping teachers experiences of the process of 'transformation' were pupil attitudes and pupil ratios.

The data showed that teachers were 'satisfied' and 'exhilarated' when they experienced pupils having tolerant, accepting attitudes.

"I feel exhilarated when you get a moment like those two boys shaking hands exploring things."

Whereas when they had to deal with sectarian incidents in the school or experienced pupils with prejudiced attitudes teachers felt 'disappointed', 'irritated' and sometimes 'cynical' about the effect that 'integration' could ever have on these young people.

"You will get disappointments pupils will clam up you will get somebody that will say something that is inappropriate there is no such thing as a perfect school you will get somebody that will make a sectarian comment and it will disappoint you that you will think we have gone so far in six months and suddenly we are back to square one and you can't avoid that they bring a heck of a lot of baggage into the classroom and they come from very mixed backgrounds in terms of economic backgrounds, social backgrounds, religious backgrounds some of them live in areas where they daren't speak their mind the label of just wearing integrated coats is saying I am a traitor to my group of I am the enemy or whatever and they do bring some of that back in with them sometimes and it is disappointing."

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"I often feel sad because we are supposed to be integrated but some of my pupils call the coloured children tarmac heads and they talk about feniens and so on and I wonder what sort of progress we are making at an integrated school when they do that sort of thing."

"Sometimes I feel quite cynical that all this money is being spent and all this time being spent and with some children there is no point and that irritates me too that there are a few children and you are just wasting your time with and they are always going to let you down and that frustrates me as well."

Finally, the impact of pupil ratios on teachers' experiences of 'transformation' was notable. In schools where the number of pupils from the minority community was either high, or rising, teachers felt 'confident', 'comfortable' and sometimes even 'committed' to the process for this reason. In schools where the number of pupils from the minority community was low and continually threatened by other schools in the area teachers felt 'anxious' 'worried' and 'disappointed'.

"Anxious because we need to maintain the pupil size of the institution and to be constantly marketing for that and to be constantly proactive."

"I was worried at the beginning I still would have worries about the growth of the school more than anything I don't have any worries about the problem of integrating the Catholics and the Protestants that it is not really a problem but the growth of the school would still be a worry because the schools in this area are not oversubscribed and we are in a competitive role here."

"Disappointed I was disappointed when I first started because I didn't realise that the percentages were so low and people didn't even seem aware that it was an integrated school so a bit disappointed in that."

Conclusions And Research Implications

The results of this research are a 'far cry' from the conclusion presented in an earlier research project that states that the main concern of teachers in transforming schools is 'job security' (Donnelly, F.M.1998). To some extent the results do confirm the theoretical position that suggests that *'the teacher needs to feel a part of, if not in control of, the improvement process'* (Eisner, E. 2000). However, what is most evident are the wide-ranging effects that both belief and understanding have had on teacher's experiences of 'transformation'. Michael Fullan (1991) in his book the New Meaning of Educational Change stated that one of the most fundamental problems in education today is *'that people do not have a clear, coherent sense of meaning about what educational change is for, what it is and how it proceeds.'* (Fullan, M.G. 1991). The findings from this research show the effects that a clear belief in the rationale and understanding of the 'meaning' of change can have on teacher's experiences of 'transformation'. They show that teachers in

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transforming schools are not passive receptacles of a change process initiated by outside agencies but rather that they have a genuine desire to see the attitudes of pupils change and schools becoming 'genuinely' integrated. For some time now the 'integrated' movement in Northern Ireland has been cynical of the 'transformation' route to integration. This research should be a testimony to the 'commitment' that a wide ranging set of teachers in transforming schools are giving to helping their schools to have a genuine impact on the lives of the future generation in Northern Ireland. It does show however that, to effect this change successfully, teachers need to believe in the integrated ideal, and understand the process of change in general and 'transformation' in particular. Principals have a large part to play in this process and with the failure of legislation formally recognising teachers' views, principals need to have excellent leadership and communication skills that properly address teachers' concerns and respect their role in the change process.

APPENDIX 1: SCHOOL AGGREGATE PROFILE MATRIX

Feeling	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Fre Count
Committed									
Enthusiastic									
Exhilarated									
Optimistic									
Confident									
Stimulated									
Supported									
Valued									
Comfortable									
Pleased									
Interested									
Satisfied									
Worried									
Confused									
Disappointed									
Irritated									
Anxious									
Bored									
Cynical									
Sad									
Angry									
Frustrated									
Isolated									
Pressurised									
									School Profile
Key/++/+/-/-- (In A)	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /
Extra words score									

A : OFTEN / B : SOMETIMES / C : HARDLY EVER / D : DOESN'T SEEM RELEVANT (WASTEBIN)

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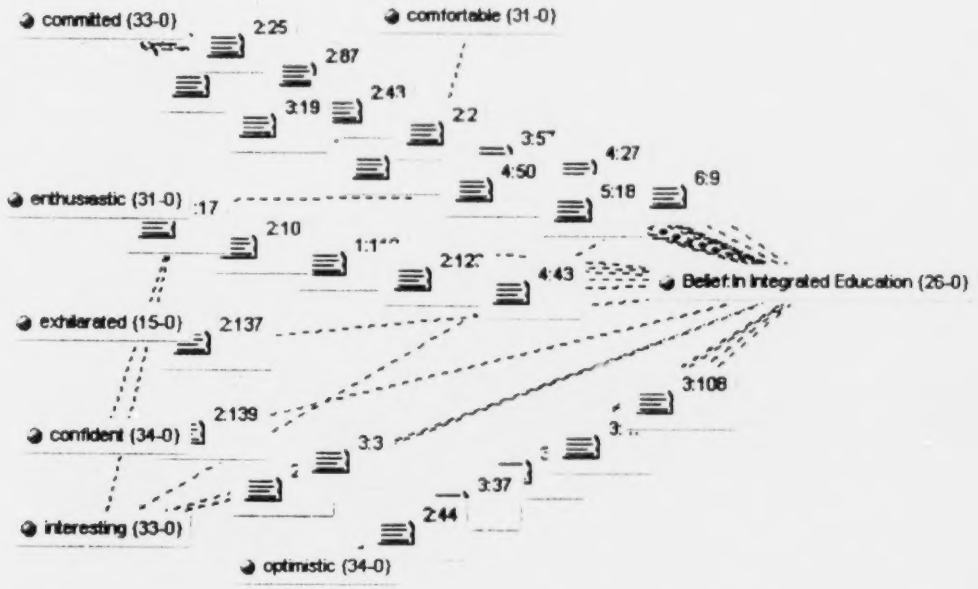
APPENDIX 2: EXAMPLE OF A NETWORK DIAGRAM FROM ATLAS Ti



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